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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003535

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SUBJECT: PKK: FM BABACAN VISIT AND NEXT STEPS

REF: A. ANKARA 2624

[¶](#)B. BAGHDAD 3478

[¶](#)C. BAGHDAD 3472

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Ellen Germain for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

[¶](#)11. (C) Summary: Turkish Ambassador Kanbay told Polmil Counselor that Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan sent a strong message during his October 23 visit that there was limited time for the GOI to act against the PKK. Babacan told the Iraqis that major, concrete action must be taken now to address the PKK terrorist problem, including capturing PKK leaders and cutting off PKK supply lines. Kanbay said he thought the Iraqi leaders felt the urgency conveyed by Babacan, but that while they responded well overall, they still sought to evade the real issues. He said Babacan welcomed the Iraqi delegation, led by the Minister of Defense, that will arrive in Ankara on October 25 to hold further discussions to defuse the current tensions, and noted that Babacan strongly requested the Iraqi delegation have the authority to make decisions, not just talk. Babacan also passed to the Iraqis the draft communiqu for the upcoming Neighbors Conference, for their reaction. End Summary.

FM Babacan: Our Patience is Running Out

[¶](#)12. (C) In an October 24 meeting, Turkish Ambassador Kanbay gave Polmil Counselor a readout of Turkish Foreign Minister Babacan's visit to Baghdad on October 23. FM Babacan was accompanied by influential Advisor to the Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Noting it was the first ministerial-level visit by the GOT to Baghdad since 2003, Kanbay said FM Babacan sent a strong message that there was limited time for the GOI to act against the PKK; action is necessary now. Kanbay said about 80% of the visit was about the PKK, even though normally such a visit would encompass a broad range of issues. According to Kanbay, Babacan underlined that efforts to overcome PKK terror via political and diplomatic means have been going on for many years with little progress.

Babacan outlined that the PKK's recent attacks and the Turkish public's emotional and angry reaction requires a decisive and unified approach by the GOI against the PKK. Babacan clearly expressed to the Iraqis, Kanbay said, that any possible military action by the GOT would be against "simple and limited" PKK targets only and not against the Iraqi people or territory. Kanbay said that Babacan was taking this point in his other regional stops as well. Kanbay said Babacan requested from his Iraqi interlocutors several major steps:

-- stop allowing the PKK safe haven in northern Iraq; end the PKK's presence now.

-- cut logistics support and the PKK's international network;
-- close PKK offices;
-- detain PKK leadership and extradite those wanted by Turkey.

Iraqi Reaction to Babacan's Message

¶3. (C) Asked about the Iraqi reaction, Kanbay said he thought the Iraqis felt the pressure but still sought to evade a real solution to the issue. The GOI rejected the idea of any military intervention on Iraqi soil. Kanbay thought Vice President Adel Abdul Mehdi received the message well, while President Talabani and Foreign Minister Zebari were more reluctant and eventually got the message. He characterized the meeting with PM Maliki positively as more like a dialogue than two sides giving speeches. He also said that Minister Zebari actually joined the Turkish delegation for much of the day.

Ministerial-Level Delegation to Ankara October 25

¶4. (C) Ambassador Kanbay said that FM Babacan welcomed PM Maliki's initiative to send a Ministry of Defense-led delegation to Ankara for talks, but Babacan strongly requested that such a delegation have full authority to make decisions without returning to Baghdad for concurrence.

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¶5. (C) According to Turkish DCM Ahmet Yazal, the following Iraqi members will comprise the delegation expected to depart for Ankara on October 25:

-- Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir Muhammed Jasim;
-- Minister of State for National Security Shirwan Wa,ili (also Iraqi envoy for combating the PKK);
-- Deputy Ministry of Interior Major General Ayden;
-- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Labeed Abbawi;
-- Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari (also Iraqi deputy envoy for combating the PKK);
-- General Askeri (aide to PM Maliki).

Lukewarm Response to Re-Activation of Trilateral Mechanism

¶6. (C) Kanbay appeared pessimistic that re-activation of the Iraq-Turkey-U.S. trilateral process for combating the PKK would yield good results. He said the GOT had requested for starters a few concrete steps to activate the trilateral fully, including closure of one or two PKK camps, the arrest of 8-10 terrorists, and a clear declaration by the GOI that PKK is a terrorist group. More than one year on, he said, not much has been accomplished. One problem, he noted, was that the mechanism was intended to involve three sides, not four. The GOT had rejected the idea of including Iraq's deputy envoy KRG Minister of Interior Karim Sinjari in the process.

Istanbul Ministerial Preparations

¶7. (C) Kanbay noted that FM Babacan's recent regional travel was focused on preparing for the Istanbul Neighbors' Meeting on November 2-3. Babacan passed the draft communique to the GOI, Kanbay said, and requested that the GOI not make changes to it.

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